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TAGS: [PE](#) [PREL](#) [SNAR](#) [MAS](#)

SUBJECT: C-26 HANDOVER CEREMONY

1. Summary: Two C-26Bs, donated to the Peruvian Air Force (FAP) by the USG in 1997, were officially dedicated to CN missions October 31 in a ceremony with Ambassador Struble and senior Peruvian officials. The USG, through Embassy NAS, gave \$3.5 million to refurbish the two aircraft that will replenish Peru's decrepit aviation fleet. An MOU between NAS and the FAP establishes a \$1.75 million maintenance and support contract using USG funds for one year, after which the FAP will assume all costs for the aircraft. One C-26 is fitted with a FLIR camera. Both are dedicated to CN purposes and will contribute to cooperation between the FAP and the Peruvian Police (PNP). End Summary.

2. In a formal ceremony with Peruvian Air Force General Conde and other senior government officials on October 31, Ambassador Struble officially acknowledged the support given by the USG of \$3.5 million to repair and upgrade two of four Peruvian Air Force (FAP) C-26B aircraft, donated to the GOP/FAP for CN purposes in May, 1997 under PD 96-57 as part of 506 drawdown. The first two donated C-26Bs were returned to Peru several years ago. The second pair had not been returned until July and September of this year, respectively, awaiting a USG decision on how best they could be used and supported. In 2005, NAS funded a \$1.75 million contract with ARINC to maintain and support the aircraft for one year, after which the GOP/FAP has agreed to assume full support. The contract includes pilot training, maintenance training, ground support equipment, spare parts and fuel. Both aircraft will be flown by FAP crews on missions that support eliminating illicit drug cultivation, production, processing and trafficking. One of the C-26Bs has been fitted with a Forward-Looking Infrared camera (FLIR), capable of tracking ground vehicles, boats or personnel. The other C-26 has been upgraded to passenger configuration. The aircraft have flight capability to do day and night missions that include intelligence gathering, combined operations, terrestrial, fluvial and marine interdiction operations, personnel transport and search and rescue support. GOP entities that will use the C-26s for CN purposes include the Ministry of Interior (CORAH,CADA,PNP), DEVIDA, and the Peruvian military.

3. Embassy PAS coordinated press coverage of the event, securing broad and accurate reporting of this important contribution to our counternarcotics efforts. Broadcast media devoted significant time in the evening newscasts, while several papers devoted full-page spreads to the ceremony, complemented by specific details of the technical capabilities of the airplanes and their equipment.

4. There is a long history to these C-26Bs. The delay in returning the second pair was for practical and financial considerations. When the FAP received the first two C-26Bs donated in the 1997 drawdown, they arrived in Peru without a support program or a well-defined mission. The FAP used the aircraft to support Peruvian Police (PNP) operations only briefly before the effort faltered. Embassy Lima sought to avoid the same outcome with the two remaining C-26Bs which remained in storage in Newfoundland, Canada, pending a decision to provide funds through Lima's NAS to return them to a flyable condition. After the Ambassador had approved a plan to ensure the aircraft would be successfully used, NAS Director Keogh and FAP Commanding General Conde signed an MOU on June 10 regarding the use and deployment of the two stored C-26Bs.

5. NAS is working with the FAP to establish a counter narcotics squadron, and to define and implement an acceptable use of its resources. After the MOU was signed in June, NAS sent four pilots to Flight Safety International to learn how to fly the C-26s. The small unit has less than 30 members and only two aircraft. The FAP have already flown more than 70 hours of support to NAS/PNP CN programs in the C-26s, despite some initial nose wheel steering problems. To date, FAP/PNP cooperation has been positive: a particularly successful operation occurred October 19, when the FLIR aircraft and crew supported a joint operation with the Comando Conjuntos which resulted in the seizure of 61 liters of opium latex at Satipo, near Mazamari. Additionally, the C-26s have provided more than 20 hours of airlift support to the NAS Police program.

6. Comment: The FAP appreciates the addition of these two refurbished aircraft to their air fleet. The Peruvian military and police fixed wing aviation support programs are unable to meet either the airlift needs of the CN program, or

to provide the Peruvian military with an emergency airlift response capability. Refurbishing these two C-26s is an investment that should pay dividends by providing the CN effort with reliable transport and reconnaissance airlift and surveillance capability, and fostering cooperation between the FAP and the Peruvian police, heretofore lacking.

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